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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relative impact of classroom and nonclassroom sources of political information on the political awareness of students in grades 4, 5, and 6. To this end, (1) the sociopolitical content of a classroom source of political information, the "Weekly Reader," is analyzed and compared to the content of evening network news; (2) the media habits of a sample of 346 students, as well as their parents and teachers, are explored; (3) the perceptions of national needs and priorities expressed by the students are examined and linked to their use and evaluation of news sources; and (4) the development of political awareness over time is considered. Data show little overlap between issues emphasized in the "Weekly Reader" and television news, and analysis of media habits shows that most students view television news irregularly or rarely. No differences are observed between viewers and nonviewers with respect to how students in each group would construct civic agenda, and children are found to draw their political agenda from both classroom and nonclassroom sources of information. Based on the findings, a number of proposals and considerations for curricula reform and future research are discussed. (Author/ND)

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Foreign Policy Research Institute

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

FINAL REPORT

HOME-SCHOOL DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL LEARNING: TELEVISION'S IMPACT UPON SCHOOL CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL NEEDS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
PROJECT NO. 3-2406

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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the relative impact of classroom and non-classroom sources of political information on the political awareness of schoolchildren. To this end, the socio-political content of a classroom source of political information, the Weekly Reader, is analyzed and compared to the content of the evening network news. Second, the media habits of a sample of 356 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students, as well as of their parents and teachers, are explored. Third, the perceptions of national needs and priorities expressed by the schoolchildren are examined and then linked to the children's use and evaluation of news sources. Finally, the development of political awareness over time is considered through both individual and across-grade comparative analyses.

The data show little overlap between issues emphasized in the Weekly Reader and television news, particularly for the younger age groups. The analysis of media habits shows that most students view television news irregularly or rarely. Nevertheless no differences are observed between viewers and non-viewers with respect to how students within each group would construct the civic agenda. Regardless of their political interest or media exposure, the children are found to draw up their political agenda from both classroom and non-classroom sources of information. Explanations in terms of information overload and the limits of cognitive development are explored. Based on the findings, a number of proposals and considerations for curricula reform and future research are discussed.

I. INTRODUCTION

Citizenship training has been recognized as essential to school curricula in democratic societies ever since Aristotle noted the need to develop a civic awareness among young Athenians. In recent decades, the term "citizenship training" has been replaced with the more general concept of political socialization and has become recognized to be an ongoing process rather than one that terminates when young citizens reach adulthood (Hyman, 1959). Nevertheless, most political scientists recognize that political socialization does begin during childhood, which, moreover, is the time period of the most intense political learning. Thus, most political socialization research efforts, the present study included, have been directed at analyzing the development of political awareness among children. The goal of this report is to present the findings of a research project designed to further the knowledge of children's civic and political awareness, and more importantly, to identify the sources of this awareness.

Prior research has identified four basic agents of political socialization: family, school, peers, and mass media (Dawson and Prewitt, 1969). Researchers such as Davies (1965) and Jennings and his associates (Jennings and Niemi, 1968, 1971; Langton and Jennings, 1969) have discussed the importance of

the family as a transmitter of political values, but have firmly concluded that only party identification or the orientation toward the political system along affective dimensions is shaped almost entirely by the family. For other aspects of political acculturation, the family serves only to reinforce that which is learned through other agents. Hess and Torney (1967) completed a nationwide study of school-children, mapping the development of political attitudes from grades two through eight. They concluded from their study that as students progressed in school, their attitudes approached teacher attitudes, implying that schools had the greatest impact in the development of young citizens. More recently, social scientists have been devoting attention to the socializing effects of the mass media (Hyman, 1963; Chaffee, Ward and Tipton, 1970).

There have been findings in related fields that suggest that mass media, especially television, play some role in the formation of general attitudes and values. Early work by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) and more recent work by the Surgeon General's Commission (Rubinstein, et al, 1972) contain evidence that children respond to the television programming they receive and that such television programming influences the formation of general social and political values.

Although there is a strong interrelationship among all the socializing agents described above, the school and the media were the foci of this project. The impact of family and peer interactions, although crucial to the study, was given a lower priority. In part, the selection of the school and the media as agents of socialization was justified because their role in the socialization process is that of formally presenting social and political information (Langton and Jennings, 1968; Chaffee, Ward and Tipton, 1970) while peer group interaction and family dynamics are relevant to the affective dimensions of political orientations and the generation of political identity (Converse, 1969).

The research reported herein concerns classroom and non-classroom sources of children's political awareness. Political awareness refers to the degree to which schoolchildren become aware of the existence and importance of various issues on the civic agenda -- social, political and economic -- which are reported through the most widely used non-classroom source of political communications, the nightly network television news, or in the classroom through instructional materials. This awareness of the political "adult world" as seen through television news is compared to the "child's world" -- defined as those issues and activities with which the child can and does become directly involved. For the age

groups examined in this study, public issues such as Watergate, inflation, and the Mideast War are issues about which the child can only learn; that is, the child can play no participatory role on a behavioral level. The child's world refers to interests and activities such as hobbies, sports or even the limited range of adult issues (such as ecology) with respect to which the child may become involved and can play some participatory role.

The project design grew from a need to evaluate the sources of political information upon which schoolchildren depend. Since World War II schools have moved away from a "civics" program to such courses as "Problems of Democracy." History courses have been replaced with social studies curricula, and some school systems are experimenting with social science and political science courses or units. In short, the schools are playing a more active role than ever before in familiarizing young citizens with the political world. At the same time through the expansion of electronic media, more information and news about the world can be heard or viewed than ever before. In this age of television-"addiction" when four or five hours spent daily before the television screen are not uncommon, at least some portion of the viewing time is likely to contain news. Children no longer have to make the effort to read a newspaper or

question their parents about the news: they need only turn on the television set or watch the dinnertime newscasts with their parents.

Children are constantly being bombarded with information from the adult world. But how much of it can they comprehend? How much interest do they generate in the news when other, more pleasant diversions are available? How much attention can they devote to media which present news from the adult community? Finally, does all this information help ensure an informed citizen? These questions and others like them stimulated this research effort. The development of civic-minded, informed, politically aware group of young citizens as well as progress in educational curricula and teaching techniques can be enhanced by answers to such questions.

Although school children are exposed to much information, empirical studies of the content of this information have been limited generally to analyses of textual material. Content analyses by scholars such as Litt (1963) have shown certain themes, such as the "participation ethic" or a "democratic creed," to be emphasized in social studies textbooks. Countless other studies by school boards, although less scientific, have shown textbooks to be culturally biased, rarely featuring minority characters, infrequently portraying women professionals, and

generally emphasizing middle class life styles. Supplemental classroom materials, including news magazines such as the Weekly Reader (published in several editions with the combined circulation of well over eleven million copies weekly), have not been analyzed for their political content even though they often serve as the single source of socio-political information available to pupils.

This void has left political scientists only to speculate as to whether or not such news magazines serve as socializing agents and do in fact contain information about the political world ("news"). More importantly, this research gap has made it impossible for educators to assess the relative impact of classroom news magazines compared to non-classroom sources of political information, such as television news. The first research question, therefore, was to analyze the school news magazines to determine their socio-political content.

An analysis of only the Weekly Reader would be insufficient to draw any inferences about its effectiveness as a medium when alternative news sources exist. Furthermore, only when compared to another news source could the relative emphasis of socio-political news in the school news magazines be assessed. Therefore, the second medium, television news,

was selected as the comparative base. Because of the general affect children have for television as the medium that brings them their daily entertainment, it was likely to be the most competitive source of political news.

The selection of these two sources of news to ascertain the availability of political information to elementary school children led to the second broad research question: what are general patterns through which the students receive political news? The simple availability of news to the child does not imply his conscientious use of it. Thus, the second broad research question was designed to determine the media habits and the evaluation of political information sources.

Although elementary school children generally are not active participants in the political world, their sense of civic commitment and attitudinal participation may be strong. Students may possess opinions, some of which are formed independently of adults through their own cognitive evaluations and others in which adults have had a shaping role. In either case, elementary school children do have opinions on public affairs and national priorities. However, these priorities of the adult world may be secondary to priorities of the child's world.

This suggested the third major research question: what are the priorities and perceptions of national needs expressed by school children, and how are they linked to the evaluation of news sources?

The final major research question concerned the processes of cognitive development and political socialization through time. Earlier it was mentioned that political socialization is a continuous process. Yet even though the study is focused on children, the attitudes of three different age groups are examined, giving the study a developmental perspective. The objective was to note the likely increase in political sophistication across age groups and over time within age groups. Moreover, the evaluation and effectiveness of the competing sources of information over the long run could be partially tested through a longitudinal analysis.

II. HYPOTHESES

It should be recalled from the introduction that there were the four basic research questions, addressed in the introduction above a number of research hypotheses.

The first broad research question was to ascertain the content of the Weekly Reader and to compare it to television news content. It was expected that the content of the Weekly Reader would vary by grade not only in sophistication but in the subject matter as well, progressing from an emphasis on

child's world issues to adult world issues. Thus, it was anticipated that the oldest children would find their editions to contain more articles directly related to adult political affairs. Secondly it was hypothesized that over each of the content analysis periods, the content of the Weekly Reader would parallel the newscasts, emphasizing the same major new items. Finally, it was believed that variations in the news would mean that different items would become salient to the children during each of the analysis periods.

The second research question was to determine the students' media habits and how they receive and evaluate political information. An initial hypothesis was that heavy television viewing would be generalized to news viewing as well, implying that the more a student watched television, the greater the likelihood he would view television news. Secondly, because television is a family medium, it was hypothesized that those students whose parents watched television news would be more likely to view the news than those students whose parents did not watch the news. Holding parental news watching constant, it was expected that students whose teachers emphasized political information in the classroom would be more likely to watch television news. As a general rule, it was thought that children's television news watching would be associated with a commensurate interest in discussing politics at all levels.

The third basic research question focused on the impact of the media, both classroom and non-classroom, on the political socialization process. It was hypothesized that students who viewed television news would be more likely to evince the importance of adult political issues than would those who used only the Weekly Reader. A further hypothesis was that a student's perception of the most important political issues would vary directly with the amount of coverage given to the issues by the news media. Given that teachers are the intermediaries for interpreting classroom materials such as the Weekly Reader, it was hypothesized that students who came from classrooms where the teacher thought it appropriate to discuss politics would be more news oriented. Moreover, the extent to which a teacher uses current events in the curriculum was thought to influence strongly both the content and the amount of political interest that the student demonstrates.

The final research question concerned the cognitive development and socialization processes through time. It was hypothesized that over time there would be consistency at the individual level with respect to what categories of issues were important. Moreover, it was expected that this consistency would be independent of the issue categories themselves, but not of the medium from which these issues were selected. In other words, the selection of issues dominant in the Weekly

Reader at time t_1 would predict to selection of a Weekly Reader political issue (rather than a television issue) at time t_2. It was also thought that consistency of issue importance over time would be demonstrated by the older pupils possessing a more fully developed cognitive framework for viewing the news. The final hypothesis was that political discussions would help enable the students cognitively to organize their thoughts, enabling those who discuss politics to be more consistent than those who do not.

The hypotheses are summarized in Figure 1. The diverse methodologies employed to investigate the hypotheses will be outlined in the following section.

FIGURE 1

SUMMARY CHART OF HYPOTHESES TO BE INVESTIGATED

RESEARCH QUESTION I - CONTENT ANALYSIS

H_1 Topics in Weekly Reader will vary by grade.

H_2 Older children receive more news from adult world than younger children.

H_3 Topics in Weekly Reader vary directly with topics on television news.

H_4 Salience of news topics to students varies with emphasis of news topics.

RESEARCH QUESTION II - MEDIA HABITS

H_1 The more the child watches television, the more likely he is to watch television news.

H_2 Students whose parents watch television news are more likely to watch television news than those whose parents do not.

H_3 Students whose teachers emphasize politics and the news in the classroom are more likely to watch television news than those whose parents do not.

H_4 Students who discuss politics with their parents are more likely to watch television news than those students who do not.

RESEARCH QUESTION III - IMPACT OF NEWS SOURCES

H_1 Students who watch television news are more likely to rank order news topics highly than those who do not.

H_2 Perceptions of the most important news topics vary with the amount of coverage in the media.

H_3 Students whose teachers discuss political events are more likely to be news oriented than those whose teachers do not.

H_4 Students whose teachers use classroom current events curricula are more likely to discuss politics than those whose teachers do not.

RESEARCH QUESTION IV - CHANGE OVER TIME

H_1 Students who emphasized news issues during the first wave are more likely to select news issues during second wave.

H_2 Older students are more likely to select issues consistently than the younger students.

H_3 Students who discuss news or politics are more likely to select issue categories consistently than those who do not.

III. METHODS

Two distinct yet complementary research modes were necessary to operationalize the hypotheses for empirical analyses. First, a content analysis of both network news programs and the news magazine Weekly Reader (which all of the children involved in the research project read as part of their classroom curriculum) was performed. Secondly, survey research techniques were employed with three groups of respondents: the school children, their parents, and their teachers. The use of each of these methods will be explicated in detail below. Specific protocols can be found in Appendices A and C.

The content analyses of the network news and Weekly Reader served dual functions. First, the initial research task was to analyze code classroom news magazines for their social and political content. Secondly the student interview required the student to rank order news issues or topics which were selected from the most frequent topics to appear in the Weekly Reader news magazine and network television newscasts in order to assess the relative salience of these topics.

For the ten weeks prior to the interviews with the student sample, the issues of the Weekly Reader were coded by a staff of content analysts. Each article was coded separately

along various dimensions, such as length of item, the page on which it appeared, the number of photographs, and most importantly, for the theme presented. A maximum of three themes per item were coded. Altogether, approximately 85 categories of topics were identified, divided basically among political issue themes, items describing scientific progress, and those related to recreational activities. The number of column inches per theme were summed over the ten week period, and those themes with the highest number of column inches were identified as "Weekly Reader issues." Because there are different editions of the Weekly Reader for each grade (News Parade for the fourth graders, Eye for the fifth graders and Senior for the sixth grade students), the procedure was performed independently for each grade.

Concurrently, the abstracts of the network television news broadcasts, published by the Vanderbilt Television News Archives, were content analyzed along the same dimensions as the Weekly Reader, with the addition of broadcast time which replaced column inches as the central indicator of story emphasis. Through this procedure and a summation of the most frequent items, it was possible to determine what the most widely reported news themes were. Television news themes were compared with the Weekly Reader themes.

The second phase of the project consisted of conducting a series of surveys. It should be noted at the outset that in investigating the research questions, the researchers relied upon "second-hand" reports of the actual behaviors that were under investigation. Instead of actual observation of classroom occurrences, the reports of teachers, parents and students were used. Instead of asking the students to keep a media diary or monitoring the amount of time which they devote to actually watching news or discussions of politics, self-report of their media behavior was used. In part these research decisions were based on more theoretical considerations. For example, in terms of the students' amount of television watching, Lyle (1972) makes the point that even noting the programs the child watches is not a "true" indicator of television watching time. The child may attend to only part of the program or may simultaneously be engaged in a second activity which creates a difference between amount of television watched and the amount of television actually received in the home environment. After reviewing a number of studies, Lyle concluded:

> The encouraging fact that emerges from these various studies, where it was possible to compare various self-reports and objective measures, is that regardless of the discrepancies in measures of time spent viewing,

> the measures are positively correlated. In other words, a person who is classified as a heavy viewer by one measure generally turns out to be a heavy viewer according to the other measures. Similarly, light viewers tend to be light viewers by whatever measure is used. (Lyle, 1972, p. 27)

In short, self-reported measures of television use may be as accurate as any other types of measures, especially given the fact that the television may be turned on, with the child paying little or no real attention to it. Moreover, a number of independent measures of the child's (and parent's) media and news viewing habits exist where both the child and parent report each other's media habits. It was anticipated that high correlations between self-report and independent report of media habits would underscore the validity of the survey technique.

The students selected as subjects all came from the William Penn School District, a school system formed through the merger of several smaller school districts in the communities of Darby, Colwyn and East Landsdowne, just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The district was selected for its heterogeneous ethnic and racial composition and range of family income. Classes within the district were chosen if they subscribed to and used the Weekly Reader. One research concern, it should be recalled, was studying the impact of watching television news compared to relying solely on in-class materials. Given the

time and money constraints, it was considered appropriate to analyze only those classes in which the Weekly Reader was required. Sufficient variation was expected in the level of television news viewing to serve the research design. Originally, the research design called for an analysis of fourth, sixth, and eighth grade students to enable the researchers to consider socialization in a developmental perspective. However, it was impossible to find in the district a sufficient number of eighth grade classes that used Weekly Reader magazine. Thus, the inquiry was limited to the fourth through the sixth grades.

Four distinct surveys were taken during the research period, two with the students and one each with the parents and teachers. To minimize "halo" effects, teachers and parents were not informed of the study beforehand, or even that a survey team would be interviewing their classes. Only after the interviewing was completed were they apprised of the general research focus, and even then specific research hypotheses were not discussed.

During the last week of November 1973, a team of eight interviewers (4 male and 4 female) personally administered the first student questionnaire. Students were interviewed

individually, generally in the lunchroom, auditorium, library or other familiar surroundings within the school. Each interview took approximately ten minutes, during which time the students were asked questions about their television watching habits in general, and more specific questions about television news and political discussions in which they sometimes engage. Students, upon completion of the interview were told not to discuss the interview with other students until all the students had a chance to be interviewed. The first round of interviews was completed within one week, including returns to interview those absent on the day of the initial visit to the school. A total of 356 students were interviewed during this phase.

About half of the questions were forced choice, where the alternative responses were read aloud by the interviewer. The remaining half were divided between open ended and rank order questions. Although most questions were oral, one set of questions (the "problem card" rank order questions) involved physically sorting printed cards into the rank order of preference.

On each of the twelve "problem cards" was printed a political or social issue or topic selected from the Weekly Reader or television news content analysis. On six cards were printed the six most frequently reported news items from the

Weekly Reader, and on the remaining six were the television news issues. When Reader themes and television news themes overlapped, the theme was dropped and replaced by the next highest theme for each grade and for the network news. As an example, during the second round of interviewing, the energy crisis was a major theme in both the Weekly Reader and the network news. Because it would have been impossible to determine the particular source of information on the crisis within the limited interview time, the energy crisis was dropped from the choices of issues available to be rank ordered, and replaced by a Weekly Reader and a television news issue reported only in one source. Thus the list of major issues may appear surprising, given the widespread reporting of such major events as the energy crisis and government scandals which dominated the news during the interview periods. Such items did not appear because they were major items in the school magazines as well. The twelve cards were randomly placed on a table, and the child was asked to pick up the card on which was written the issue which they viewed as the "most important issue or problem facing the nation today." Virtually all the students understood all the words used on the cards. Standard one-word synonyms were given to those few students who did not know the meaning of the problem card word.

The second phase of interviewing consisted of distributing to the parents of the student sample a six page written questionnaire. Students were given by their teachers sealed packets addressed to their parents ("To the Parents of John Doe") in which a cover letter, return mail prepaid envelope and questionnaire were enclosed. The cover letter stated that the child had been interviewed for a study, the purpose of which was curriculum reform and furtherance of the use of television in the classroom. The parents were told that information which they provided would help their children's education by contributing to program development, and were thanked for their assistance. In addition, the cover letter contained instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and directions not to discuss the questionnaire with the child until it had been completed.

To serve as a check on student self-report and the student's report of parental media habits the parent questionnaire repeated many of the questions on the student interview schedule. In addition, questions paralleling those given to the children were asked of the parents. Finally, data were collected on parental political and issue orientations.

The response rate from the initial distribution of the questionnaire to the parents was approximately 40 per cent.

A follow up letter a week later generated an additional 20 per cent response. A cut off date for the return of parent's questionnaires was established at three weeks after the initial distribution in order to minimize the possible shift in rank-ordering issues due to news developments in the intervening period.

The third phase of interviews was with the teachers of the sampled students. The seventeen teachers from whose classes the sample was drawn were given brief questionnaires in which they were asked about their use of current events in the curriculum. In addition, data pertaining to their personnel political preferences were collected. Teacher responses were weighted according to the number of students interviewed from his or her class. Responses were received from fifteen of the seventeen teachers.[1]

Approximately four months after the initial round of interviews was completed, the students were again interviewed. Neither the students nor the teachers had been told of the research plan to re-interview the students, hence panel bias was substantially eliminated. Questions for the second wave

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[1] Teachers' response rate was 88.2 per cent. The number of students whose parents responded was 60.3 per cent. This is slightly higher than the actual number of responding parents due to a few parents with two or more children in the sample.

included validity checks on the theoretically unchanging variables as well as new questions using semantic differential and rank order techniques. New problem cards were also included. To clarify the semantic differential concept as much as possible, students were given full instructions and were asked to place a marker on a thermometer-like scale. All indications, including performance on a sample thermometer ("Are witches ugly or beautiful?"), suggested that the concept was completely understood. Of the 356 students initially interviewed, 339 were re-interviewed. The remaining seventeen had either moved from the district, were absent from school on the re-interview and follow-up days, or were otherwise unavailable for a second interview. The panel mortality rate of approximately five per cent compares favorably with other short-term panel studies.

All findings to be reported in this study are correlational rather than causal. In some cases there are longitudinal data from the first versus second round of student interviews that show certain trends in the questions that were asked in both the first and second waves of student interviews. However, even this trend data cannot be considered causal. The correlational analyses do mirror any number of correlational explorations that have been and are still being

done not only in this area but throughout the social sciences. The present research falls in the mainstream of contemporary social research although it is hoped that the insights gained from this study would encourage and facilitate more precise causal modelling and analysis.

IV. RESULTS

1. Contents of the Weekly Reader

The content analyses of the Weekly Reader revealed the magazine to contain somewhat less information from the adult political world than was expected. During the period leading up to the first round of interviews, articles from some forty categories appeared in the Weekly Reader. Since many articles were on topics which appeared only one or two times, only the top ten issues or topics are reported in Table 1. Inclusion in the list was based on total column inches over the content analysis period rather than on the number of articles. Previous research has shown an extremely high correlation between the number of articles and the number of column inches for a theme,[2] and the using column inches minimizes the possibility of ties.

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[2] Studies by Frank (1973) and Meadow (1973) have shown the comparability of column inches in print media to the number of broadcast seconds in electronic media.

TABLE 1
TOPICS EMPHASIZED IN WEEKLY READER
DURING FIRST CONTENT ANALYSIS PERIOD

	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6
1.	Ecology	Animal Life	Minority Affairs
2.	Youth Achievement	Sports	Animal Life
3.	Sports	Youth Achievement	Ecology
4.	Science/Inventions	Ecology	Women's Achievement
5.	Art/Music	Women's Achievement	Disasters
6.	Animal Life	Disasters	Watergate
7.	Education	Transportation	Hobbies
8.	Entertainment	Recreation/Parks	Economy/Inflation
9.	Disaster	Senate action	Space/UFO
10.	Recreation/Parks	Entertainment	Consumer Affairs

A review of the material that was available to users of the three separate editions of the Weekly Reader shows how little overlap exists across the three editions. Only three topics -- ecology, natural disasters and animals -- were major topics for all three grades. Of the ten topics for fourth graders only one, ecology, can be considered an adult political issue. Undoubtedly disasters, science and education are topics central to the adult world, but they are hardly issues marked by the degree of controversy surrounding other political issues. The remaining topics, such as new playground activities or a new animal at the zoo, are topics salient primarily to children.

Fifth grade students were exposed to considerably more news and controversial subjects than fourth graders. Senate actions, including confirmation hearings and the Ervin Watergate committee hearings, were heavily reported in the fifth grade Reader. Other issues such as the women's movement and ecology also were major issues in the fifth grade edition. However a number of child's world subjects still appeared, and the fifth grade issues more closely resembled those in the fourth than the sixth grade edition.

Beyond descriptions of animal life and hobby reports, the sixth grade edition of the Reader had far more social and political content than the editions for younger age groups. Watergate and inflation, clearly the major issues of the day, were among the most widely covered topics in the Reader. Other controversial or long-standing issues of the adult world such as minority affairs, the women's movement and the consumer movement all were highlighted in the sixth grade edition during the first analysis period.

The second round of content analysis revealed many of the same topics to be important in the Weekly Reader. Table 2 presents the top ten topics for each grade.

TABLE 2
TOPICS EMPHASIZED IN WEEKLY READER
DURING SECOND CONTENT ANALYSIS PERIOD

	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6
1.	Science/Inventions	Science/Inventions	Gas & Oil Shortages
2.	Animal Life	Sports	Animal Life
3.	Sports	Gas & Oil Shortages	Ecology
4.	Gas & Oil Shortages	Youth Achievement	Sports
5.	Youth Achievement	Animal Life	Science/Inventions
6.	Fads	Ecology	Art/Music
7.	Transportation	Women's Achievement	Space/U.F.O.
8.	Art/Music	Transportation	NATO
9.	Minority Affairs	Health	Transportation
10.	Education*	Art/Music	Impeachment
	Occupations*		

* tie

There was considerably more overlap in the second interview round between grades than during the first round, with four categories limited to only the fourth grade (education, minority affairs, fads and interesting occupations), two categories unique to the fifth grade (women's achievements and health care), and three categories appearing only in the sixth grade edition (Space/U.F.O., NATO countries, and impeachment). Moreover, six categories appear across all grades compared to only two during the first round.

Looking at each grade separately, it can be seen that more child's world topics appear in the earlier grades. Nevertheless, two serious adult issues, minority affairs and the energy crisis, became important. It is interesting to note that ecology, which had been the number one fourth grade topic during the first content analysis period, was absent while the gas and oil shortage, which could be considered as an ecology threatening issue, increased in importance. Thus, even with the adult world energy issue becoming prominent, the basis for its standing as a controversial issue (i.e., environmental damage, pollution) was removed from the pages of the fourth grade edition.

Most of the issues featured during the first content analysis period were found again during the second period for the fifth graders, with only the science/ inventions category and the energy crisis moving from off the list to prominent positions. Animal life, sports, women's achievements and young people's achievements remained on the list with a few less frequently reported issues at the bottom of the list shifting places. The prominence of the science/ inventions category, both in fifth and sixth grades,

was closely tied to the energy crisis reports because many of the inventions reported were energy saving or energy-creating devices.

The sixth grade edition once again contained nearly all adult world issues, including the impeachment issue (which by then had replaced Watergate as such) and items about NATO countries. Viewing the entire sixth grade list, the items could quite easily compose the contents of an average daily newspaper.

The results of the television news content analysis were quite predictable. In Table 3 only the top seven issues are reported.[3] During the first period, half of the issues most reported (in terms of total amount of broadcast time) were domestic and half foreign. During the second period, the items were oriented somewhat more to domestic issues.

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[3] It should be recalled from the methods section that separate content analyses of the media yielded four distinct issue lists. Tables 1 and 2 present the ten issues most prominent in the Weekly Reader during each analysis period. Table 3 presents the seven news issues to which the most broadcast time was devoted. From each of the lists [Table 1 + Table 3 (a) and Table 2 + Table 3 (b)] the first six issues were selected to be written on the "problem cards." In cases of overlap, the seventh issue on each list replaced the overlapping category. Figure 5 in Appendix A presents the list of problem cards which were made available for the students to rank order during each interview wave.

TABLE 3

TOPICS EMPHASIZED IN TELEVISION NEWS CONTENT ANALYSES[4]

	(a) First Round	(b) Second Round
1.	Middle East War	Energy Crisis
2.	Watergate	Watergate
3.	Economy/Inflation	Middle East
4.	Crime and Terrorism	Impeachment
5.	Energy Crisis	Foreign Policy/Kissinger
6.	European/Latin American Affairs	Labor News
7.	Chinese/Soviet Affairs	Crime and Terrorism

Overall, there were only two categories which were identical to the Weekly Reader reports. During the first round, Watergate reports overlapped with the sixth grade edition of the Reader, while during the second round the energy crisis was found as a major topic across all three grades. Other issues, such as the economy or impeachment, were on the Reader lists of top ten issues, but did not appear in the top six positions from which the problem cards issues were drawn.

The hypothesized relationship of age to exposure to adult issues was found to be only partly true. Clearly the sixth grade students were exposed to more adult socio-political topics than were the younger children, but the

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[4] Because of the form of summaries in the Vanderbilt News Index, some of the categories such as "crime and terrorism" or "foreign policy/Kissinger," which might be more closely distinguished, were collapsed. See Figure 3 in Appendix A for a sample page of the index.

topics were not news issues (defining news as information based upon current events. Of the top sixth grade issues, only the economy and Watergate could be considered as current news. The remainder, such as minority affairs or ecology, could be considered long standing issues about which a citizen should be informed. Such topics, however, rarely provided current or fast-breaking "hard" news to the child.

For the lower grades, the relationships between television news and the Weekly Reader reports were even weaker. The top news items reported on television appeared nowhere on the lists of items most reported in the fifth and fourth grade editions of the Weekly Reader. Thus, the expectation that the Reader would parallel the newscasts, emphasizing major news items, was unjustified.

Finally, although the finding may be unique to the unusual number of highly important news events during the period of the study, there was little variation in the list of important news items from the first to the second content analysis periods. Watergate, the Middle East war and

Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, and the enduring energy crisis provided much common news for both periods. This became particularly problematic for the research questions posed concerning the issues considered important by the children. With over six months to absorb information about these issues, the likelihood of the students becoming familiar with the issues and considering them salient was increased. The news issues during the period of the study were therefore unusually well suited to compete for the attention of the students who might ordinarily not have heard of less enduring issues or whose attention to news might have been limited by continuing exposure to categories such as "animal life" or "young people's activities."

2. Media Habits and Political Attention

The interview schedule included many items concerning the students' media habits. To assess the value of television news as an agent of political socialization in developing civic awareness, it was necessary to determine its impact on political discussions in the home. It is possible, for example, that television news sparks political discussion, which in turn heightens the child's interest in politics. Therefore, particular attention was devoted to news viewing behavior and political discussions generated by news watching. This section first describes the viewing habits of the student sample and their parents, and then explores the hypotheses on the evaluation of sources of political information.

Table 4 presents the reports of both the students and their parents as to how often the parents and students watch the evening network news.

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS' NEWS VIEWING

Frequency of Television News Watching	Students' Report of Parents	Parents' Self-Report	Students' Self-Report
Almost Always	50.0 %	42.5%	17.3%
Sometimes	27.4%	38.2%	43.2%
Almost Never	22.6%	19.3%	39.5%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	n=354	n=216	n=354

Although the children's reports and the parents' self-reports varied, the percentages were close enough to suggest that the students were familiar with their parents news watching behavior. This familiarity in no way meant that the students imitated their parents' news watching behavior. Only about one third the number of students who reported their parents as habitual news watchers were themselves regular viewers. Fully two fifths of the students reported they almost never watched television news.

The relationship of parental news watching (as reported by the student) to the child's news viewing behavior flows only in one direction, i.e., if the parents almost never view the news, the child almost never views the news. However,

if the parents are regular news viewers, the child is as likely to be a regular viewer as he is never to be a viewer at all. Thus, the relationship between a child's news watching and his report of parental news watching as expressed by the Pearsonian correlation coefficient was large, but not overwhelming (+.38). The relationship did, however, strengthen across grades. For the fourth graders, the correlation coefficient was +.29, while for the fifth grade students it rose to +.41 and ultimately to +.43 for the sixth graders. Using the parents' reports of their own viewing behavior instead of the students' reports, the relationships were slightly lower, but still in the same direction and statistically significant. The pattern suggests that the maturation process includes increasing use of the adult source of news, and sharing in the dinnertime adult ritual of watching the news.

Considerably greater variation between parents and students' reporting appeared in their responses to the question of whether or not they talked about the news after each broadcast. Table 5 illustrates these differences, which correlated only +.05.[5] This low correlation may have been caused by

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[5] While some questions may be raised about the use of interval data statistics on non-interval data, a review of such statistics as the contingency coefficient and Cramer's V against the Pearsons reported in this paper indicate little variation. Therefore, Pearson's r correlation coefficients are reported inasmuch as they are most commonly understood in the social sciences. For a further discussion of the use of interval statistics on non-interval data, see Labovitz (1970) and Boyle (1970).

an underestimation by the students of the frequency of political discussions, or an exaggeration of the number of discussions by the parents. In either case, the only firm conclusion which can be drawn from the table is that a discussion of the news does not necessarily follow the broadcast.

TABLE 5

FREQUENCY OF POST-NEWS DISCUSSION

Talk About the News After the Newscast	Students' Report	Parents' Report
Almost Always	13.2%	9.0%
Sometimes	41.3%	70.5%
Almost Never	45.5%	20.5%
	100.0%	100.0%
	n=325	n=210

The students in the sample have other opportunities to discuss the news and politics in addition to the period after the news. Table 6 shows the responses of the students to questions about discussions of the news or politics at home (other than after the news), with friends, and with teachers. Just as many students reported discussing the news or politics with their peers as reported discussing news or politics with their families. Only with teachers were considerably more discussions reported.

TABLE 6
STUDENTS' DISCUSSIONS OF NEWS OR POLITICS

News and Political Discussions	With Family	With Friends	With Teacher
YES	51.7%	50.0%	69.6%
NO	48.3%	50.0%	30.4%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	n=354	n=354	n=354

The instrumental value of television news in promoting political discussions in the home becomes clear when Table 7 is viewed. There the "almost always" and "sometimes" categories from Table 5 are collapsed into a "yes" category, over half (54.7 per cent) of the students discuss politics following the newscast. Looking first at the off-diagonal quadrant, 18.5 per cent of the students reported they did not discuss

TABLE 7

STUDENTS' REPORT OF WHEN POLITICS ARE DISCUSSED

		Discuss Politics other Times: Yes	No	
Discuss Politics After News	Yes	36.2%	18.5%	54.7%
	No	16.4%	28.9%	45.3%
		52.6%	47.4%	100.0%
			n=324	

politics other than after the news. Presumably, the discussions in these homes are promoted by news events and news broadcasts, without which there would be no political discussions in the home. As for the 16.4 per cent who did not have discussions following the news yet had discussions at other times, it remains likely that their families are politically oriented, but for some reason or other do not watch the evening news. On the main diagonal, a hard core of 28.9 per cent of the students never discuss politics. A plurality of the sample (36.2 per cent) reported both general and past news political discussions at home. Overall, television news contributed to the political discussions of over half the students, including nearly one fifth of the sample who might not otherwise have political discussions at home.

Television news can claim additional responsibility for the greater salience of politics to students who view it. Correlation coefficients between reported news watching and discussing politics with teachers ($r = +.16$), friends ($r = +.17$) and parents ($r = +.17$) revealed a small but consistent and statistically significant positive association between watching the news and engaging in political discussions.

It has been demonstrated in this section that television news plays an important role in the political discussions of the student sample. But precisely which students are likely to watch television news remains an open question. The data and discussions of earlier pages provided no basis for causal inferences. News watching is associated with talking about politics, but it cannot be determined whether television news watching results from an interest in politics or whether television news watching spurs an interest in civic affairs. To test the latter possibility, a number of possible relationships were examined.

One hypothetical relationship described above was that heavy television viewing would be associated with news viewing. Television is a medium for which most elementary school age children have high affect, so it was anticipated first that this affect would be generalized sufficiently to include programs such as the evening news which presents information that otherwise would be unamusing or even distasteful. Secondly, if television viewing is "addictive," one would expect entertainment television viewing to be generalized to include news watching.

Neither of these hypotheses was borne out by the data. Less than one half of one per cent of the variance in news watching was explained by the amount of television the child reported watching ($r=+.07$). Moreover, the Pearsonian

correlation between liking television in general (the generalized affect hypothesis) and watching the evening news was only +.04.[6] From these findings, it appears that general television viewing stands apart from television news watching. Furthermore, it suggests that interest in politics and political discussions spurs an interest in and directs the students toward the news rather than the reverse, for children are unlikely to discover any interest in the news by randomly watching television until the news comes on the air. This result concurs with early media studies of adults (Lazarsfeld, et al., 1948; Klapper, 1960). The present study found that even for children the media have a reinforcing rather than an initiative or exposing function in the political socialization process.

3. Classroom Versus Non-Classroom News Sources

The central research problem around which this project was structured concerned the relative effectiveness of classroom

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[6] In this, as in other examples, the possibility that this surprisingly low Pearson's correlation coefficient was artifactually generated was tested. Both Cramer's V and the contingency coefficient C were similarly small.

of classroom (Weekly Reader) and non-classroom (television) sources of information. Students who view television news were considered likely to be more politically aware (i.e. stress the importance of adult world problems) than were their classmates who were exposed only to the Weekly Reader. Table 8 presents the results of the tests of this hypotheses.

TABLE 8

NUMBER OF TELEVISION NEWS VERSUS WEEKLY READER TOPICS RANKED AMONG TOP SIX TOPICS (PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS)

Number of Television News Issues Ranked Among First Six Problem Cards		First Round	Second Round
0	All Weekly Reader	2.2%	1.5%
1		0.3%	2.7%
2		7.3%	10.0%
3	Half Reader, Half News	25.6%	25.0%
4		36.5%	37.1%
5		25.6%	20.4%
6	All Television News	2.5%	2.7%
		100.0% (n=356)	100.0% (n=339)

In Table 8 are the summary scores of the problem card questions. In the table, a score of zero signifies that all the issues or topics chosen as the most important problems facing the United States (i.e. the first six out of twelve issues) were selected from the topics emphasized in the Weekly Reader, while a score of six denotes that all six top issues were drawn from the network television news items.

In both the first and second round of interviews, a plurality of students selected in their first six choices four of the television news topics as the most important problem and only two Weekly Reader topics. Thus initially it would appear that regardless of the child's use of television news, he is apt to perceive issues from the adult world as being somewhat more important then child's world issues. Table 9 verifies this. No differences were found between those who watched television news and those who did not with respect to choice of television or Weekly Reader issues as most important. A cross tabulation of television news watching and issues choice during the second wave of interviews revealed a similar pattern. The correlation between the child's self reported newswatching and issue selection was an insignificant +.03. The parent's report of the child's news watching resulted in a similar finding. Thus, the hypothesized importance of television news for aiding the child to form an adult political agenda was rejected.

Controlling for a number of variables such as the standard demographic variables of age, sex, and socio-economic status failed to strengthen the news viewing-issue selection linkages. Moreover, controlling for political discussions also had no effect.

TABLE 9

CROSS TABULATION OF NEWS WATCHING AND ISSUE SELECTION

Frequency of News Viewing	ALMOST ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	ROW TOTAL
ALL READER 0.0	2 * 28.6 ** 3.3 ***	1 14.3 0.7	4 57.1 2.9	7 2.0
1.00	0 0.0 0.0	1 100.0 0.7	0 0.0 0.0	1 0.3
2.00	3 11.5 4.9	13 50.0 8.5	10 38.5 7.1	26 7.3
3.00	17 18.7 27.9	45 49.5 29.4	29 31.9 20.7	91 25.7
4.00	23 17.8 37.7	50 38.8 32.7	56 43.4 40.0	129 36.4
5.00	15 16.5 24.6	41 45.1 26.8	35 38.5 25.0	91 25.7
6.00 ALL TELEVISION	1 11.1 1.6	2 22.2 1.3	6 66.7 4.3	9 2.5
COLUMN TOTAL	61 17.2	153 43.2	140 39.5	354 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 10.82105 with 12 degrees of freedom significance = 0.5443

*n

**Row Pct

***Col. Pct

Television news viewing was not the only indicator of the child's interest in politics which failed to predict to adult-oriented issue selection. Contrary to several hypothesized relationships, talking about the news (r=+.02), or engaging in other political discussions with the family (r=+.06), or with the teacher (r=+.03) all failed to show any significant relationship to the selection of adult news topics. The absence of any correlations between the child's interest in politics as measured by his political discussions, and his selection of adult world issues is particularly surprising.

One possible explanation is that much early political learning is observational learning, and that in fact many students who do not report <u>discussing</u> politics nevertheless pay attention to others' discussions and have a passive rather than active involvement in political discussions. When forced actively to participate in a political "discussion" by selecting a problem card, these passive observers respond in a manner similar to the active discussants, obscuring the relationship between discussing politics and choosing adult world issues. The failure to link teacher discussions of politics with either <u>Reader</u> issue selection (the teacher discussions may revolve

around a regular weekly lesson plan based on the Reader) or television issue selection is attributable to the fact that all teachers reported at least some discussion of the news in class, although a weighted average (for the number of pupils in the class in the sample) of 79.3% of the students were in classrooms where the teacher reported frequently talking about the news. Consequently, almost all experimental variation was lost.

Several other unexpected (and difficult to interpret) findings emerged in the correlations with the problem card ordering index. First, there was a small but statistically significant relationship between the grade of the responding child and the rank ordering of the problem cards. However, contrary to an intuitive expectation, the relationship was negative -- i.e. the oldest children (sixth grade) were more likely to consider Weekly Reader issues more important than adult world issues than were the younger children (r=-.27). Similarly, age was negatively correlated with adult news issue selection (r=-.23). These findings held only for the first wave of interviews and problem cards, and not for the second wave. Possibly the clear cut differences between the television news topics and the Reader topics in the lower grades made it easier for the fourth and fifth graders to separate the news clearly emanating from the adult world from news of the child's world than it was for the sixth graders whose topics from the Weekly Reader were

similar to adult issues. Thus, the higher levels of cognitive development of the older students was outweighed by the difficulty of the choice of topics to order. Had the issues available for ranking been the same across grades, the initial hypothesis would have been expected to be validated.

One final result worth noting is the relationship between the "functions of the news" and the choice of topics from the adult world. During both the first and the second wave of interviews, there was a small but significant ($r_{t_1} = -.11$, $r_{t_2} = -.12$) correlation between selecting news topics and using the news for a "status conferral" function. By this is meant that students who reported that they liked to learn about the news (regardless of its source) "so you could tell your friends or parents interesting things you see or read about in the news" were more likely, at a small but statistically significant level, to select television news topics as important. Children using the news for the "vicarious living" function ("so you could see or read about people doing things you would like to do but can't or are not allowed to do") had a greater propensity to choose Weekly Reader topics.

The functional interpretation of communications phenomena has been found in the communications literature for nearly three decades. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) noted in their

radio research that different people use the media at varying times for different purposes. Later, Wright (1959) advanced the functional approach with his concept of "surveillance of the environment." For the students in the sample, both of these "functions of communicators" theories prove to be empirically founded. Approximately one third (32.8 per cent) of the sample used the news in order to survey the environment, i.e., to collect and distribute information about events. When they possessed information useful in exchanges with adults or with peers, it is likely that these children found their prestige in the adult community enhanced. Consequently such children were likely to respond to the problem card situation as if they were dealing with adults (the interviewers, of course, were adults), and selected television news issues as important.

The Weekly Reader also serves a number of functions for its readers. Only a quarter of the students report using the Reader for status conferral, yet it is these students who are likely to select more Reader topics as important issues. Such children have indeed learned that the media can bestow prestige to those who absorb and transmit messages, yet have not fully realized that knowledge of the topics of the Weekly Reader carries considerably less prestige than does that of adult world news issues.

Still, the finding that the younger students are more likely to evaluate adult issues as important than are the older students remains unexplained. Moreover, the inconsistnet findings over

the two waves and the absence of a relationship between issue selection and news watching are also surprising. One explanation of these findings may be tied to the nature of the Weekly Reader itself. The Weekly Reader varies its content from week to week, switching from current events and adult world news to child's world reports, and therefore does present reports which parallel adult newscasts. Thus the student who relies on the Reader never is certain whether or not the items appearing regularly are topics consequential to adults or only to children. Confusion over issues such as science/inventions or natural disaster is particularly understandable since these issues are in fact important to adults. In the sixth grade edition, the Reader topics are closest to adult issues, which may partially explain the surprising relationship of the grade of the respondent to his rank ordering of issues.

Finally the positive affect which the children have for the Reader (70.2 per cent reported they usually or almost always enjoyed reading it) may be related to issue choice. Students like the Reader because they can learn about new and different things or people from its pages. The salience of this positively valued source is increased, and the Reader thereby develops a following of students who consider its featured topics to be important.

Specifically which issues dominated the childrens' agenda can be found in the next table. Table 10 shows which two issues were considered the most and least important issues respectively during each of the two interview waves.[7] For the fourth grade, the two

[7] For the list of available issues see Figure 5 in Appendix A.

TABLE 10

TOPICS RANKED AS MOST AND LEAST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS

	FIRST WAVE		SECOND WAVE	
	Most Important	Least Important	Most Important	Least Important
Grade 4	1. Gas & Oil Shortage 2. Watergate	Art/Music/ Sports	Watergate Crime & Terrorism	Fads Sports
Grade 5	1. Gas & Oil Shortage 2. Watergate	Sports Women's Achievements	Crime & Terrorism Watergate	Sports Women's Achievements
Grade 6	1. Gas & Oil Shortage 2. Middle East War	Hobbies Women's Achievements	Crime & Terrorism Watergate	Art/Music Sports

issues considered most important were the energy crisis and Watergate, which were selected as the most or second most important problems by 76.4 per cent and 43.6 per cent respectively. These were followed by crime (25.2 per cent) the Middle East War (20.1 per cent) and animal life (17.7 per cent). The least important issues, ranked among the last two topics by the fourth grades were art/music (62.2 per cent), and sports (55.8 per cent), followed by young people's activities (18.5 per cent), China and USSR (12.6 per cent) and surprisingly, animal life (10.1 per cent). During the second wave, the most important problems were again Watergate (35.6 per cent), closely followed by crime (34.8 per cent) and then by animal life (26.8 per cent), impeachment (25.9 per cent) and transportation (17.8 per cent). The presence of both impeachment and Watergate, which were virtually inseparable issues by the time of the second round of

interviewing, undoubtedly split the Watergate "vote" lowering the Watergate score. Perhaps additional percentage points were lost to the crime and terrorism category considering the criminal aspects of the Watergate issue. Animal life and transportation represented the Reader items ranked among the highest fourth grade topics. The least important issues for the fourth graders were fads (59.3 per cent) and sports (57.1 per cent). Two other Reader issues, science and inventions (13.4 per cent) and young peoples' activities (12.5 per cent), joined foreign policy (12.5 per cent) and Middle East[8] (12.5 per cent), two adult topics at the bottom of the list. Consistently over both time frames, domestic issues took priority over international issues. In this respect, the students are quite similar to the adult population, which, political scientists continually find, considers domestic issues more salient than international problems. The adult world energy crisis and Watergate problems dominated the fourth grade selections as well. The only issue notably absent was the economy and inflation, problems in which the children have little or no participatory roles as do parents.

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[8] These two issues were closely related to Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" during the period of the analysis.

In the fifth grade the same issues as for the fourth grade were ranked in the same order, with the addition of the Reader ecology issue. Somewhat similar percentages were reported also (energy crisis 74.7 per cent, Watergate 33.6 per cent, crime 18.7 per cent, Middle East war 16.8 per cent, animal life 13.1 per cent, ecology 13.1 per cent). The least important issue during the first round was sports (63.3 per cent). Following were women's achievements (30.9 per cent), a heavily reported Reader topic, and young people's activities. Two news issues, China and USSR (18.7 per cent) and the economy (13.1 per cent) were also considered among the least important issues. During the second wave, crime and terrorism became the top issue (38.8 per cent) with Watergate dropping to 31.8 per cent. Impeachment was highly rated as in the fourth grade, 23.3 per cent. Two Reader topics, animal life and ecology (25.3 per cent and 21.4 per cent respectively) were also relatively important problems to the fifth graders. As in the first round, sports (58.3 per cent) and women's achievements (33.0 per cent) headed the least important issue list, followed by three news issues, foreign policy (19.4 per cent), the Middle East situation (16.5 per cent), and, surprisingly, impeachment (14.6 per cent). It can only be speculated that the lower positions of Watergate and impeachment demonstrated that the students were tired of those issues, and anxious to "put Watergate behind them." Contrary to the

hypothesis that topics emphasized during both time frames would be consistently highly ranked by the students, it was found that continued exposure to the same issues may cause a child to lower his estimate of the importance of the issue. The cleavage between those fifth graders rating impeachment among the most important problems and those rating it among the least important demonstrates the early formation of polar responses often found among adults (including these children's parents, 24.6 per cent of whom ranked Watergate as the least important issue), when particular issues dominate the news.

The sixth graders also ranked the gas and oil shortage as the biggest problem (78.6 per cent), followed, in the absence of a Watergate problem card because of the Reader-television news overlap, by the Middle East War (29.8 per cent). Crime ranked third, with 24.8 per cent of the students considering it as the first or second most important problem. Animal life (16.5 per cent), and ecology (16.5 per cent), two Reader topics were also frequently chosen as most important. Least important were hobbies (66.8 per cent), and women's achievements (38.0 per cent) followed by animal life (17.3 per cent), the economy (16.5 per cent), and Europe and Latin America (14.9 per cent). During the second round crime (40.2 per cent), Watergate (28.2 per cent) and impeachment continued to lead the list of problems, followed by animal life (25.6 per cent) and ecology (23.1 per cent). The

least important issues were with one exception from the Reader, art/music (64.2 per cent) and sports (51.3 per cent) were considerably lower on the agenda than space/U.F.O.'s (18.0 per cent) impeachment, and science and inventions (tied with 11.1 per cent). In general, the sixth grade pattern was similar to the fourth and fifth grades discussed above.

Overall, the political agendas of the students uniquely resemble those of neither the news nor the Reader. Both contribute to constructing political and social priorities among elementary school children. During the first wave of interviews the Middle East war had dominated the news, yet in only one case was it one of the top two issues. The energy crisis, which had just begun at the time of the survey, became the most important issue by far. Other issues such as crime, which is a perennial problem, were consistently ranked highly even though they dominated the news much less than either the Middle East war or economic events. The low ranking by the children of the economy as a problem (in contrast with its status as the overwhelmingly most important issue among parents -- 41.1 per cent, compared to the energy crisis at 34.0 per cent and only 7.7 per cent for Watergate) suggests perhaps the degree of insulation American children have from economic problems.[9] Surprisingly they consider animal life and ecology

[9] Pre-tests indicated all students had some grasp of the meaning of the economy and inflation. In addition, they were issues mentioned from time to time in the Weekly Reader.

as more important problems facing the nation. Both these conservation-related issues are certainly less salient to the child's world than are hobbies or young peoples activities. To sum up, the hypothesis that news or Reader topic ranking would vary directly with the amount of coverage of the topic was disproven.

Stability of Student Attitudes

In his article on belief systems, Converse (1964) demonstrated the low stability of attitudes of the American mass public. The same instability was found among the student sample as well. Contrary to the expected finding, there was virtually no relationship (r=+.06) between news issue selection during the first wave and news issue choice during the second wave. Although the specific topics offered on the problem cards were varied from time t_1 to t_2, it was expected that the impact of the most effective media upon the perceptions of each child would remain essentially the same. Thus students selecting new issues at t_1 were expected to choose generally the same news issues at t_2. Such was not the case.

An explanation for the dissimilar findings across the two interview waves may be tied to the cognitive development of the students. There apparently is no cognitive framework or system whereby each child is able to separate and distinguish uniformly adult world and child's world topics. On the average, students are able to recognize the importance of adult issues, but individually the students fail to maintain a cognitive framework for clearly and consistently distinguishing the importance of adult issues from topics which are important to children.

It was thought that there would be a number of intervening variables which would strengthen the stability over time, such as the age or grade of the students. There was no relationship between the first and second waves with respect to the problem cards regardless of variables for which controls were made. This pattern held for all grades, suggesting only marginal differences, if any, between fourth, fifth and sixth grades with respect to the cognitive compartmentalization of news issues.

To be certain that this instability over time was substantive rather than an artifact of the survey methodology for young children, a number of cross-tabulations were computed for the theoretically unchanging variables such as news watching behavior and affect for television. The correlations of the t_1-t_2 measurements on the same variables were all in the +.6 to +.8 range.

Assurances of the validity of the self-report technique came from comparisons of the childrens and parents' reports of television and news watching behavior. The correlations between the parental and childrens' reports of the parent's news watching behavior were not particularly high (+.32), and varied considerably with the grade of the child reporting (fourth grade, r=+.19; fifth grade, r=+.25; sixth grade,

r=+.53) Nevertheless, there was a significant relationship for each grade. Had categories been collapsed, the relationships would have been stronger.

These findings of consistent reporting of stable variables further underscore the absence of a t_1-t_2 linkage for the issue selection variable. Each issue was approached or selected for its temporary salience, only to be replaced by other issues at a later date. Moreover, the categories of important issues (besides the specific issues themselves) were replaced by the sampled students.

The absence of a stable, steady assessment of television news (or Reader) issues as more significant was surprising. A clear consistent high ranking of news issues by news viewers would have meant that viewing the news did in fact have a role in developing the political awareness of the students. Similarly, uniform selection of the Weekly Reader topics as significant would have underscored the impact of classroom materials. Instead, the results were mixed. In a general way, the students recognized the greater importance of news issues and rated these topics as more important, but still several topics of the child's world were able to penetrate the list of top issues.

The minimal impact of other aspects of the political socialization process -- particularly the discussion of politics

in the home and with friends or teachers -- on the choice of news issues was also surprising. Perhaps the sample group was still too young to be strongly interested in or influenced by the discussions of political issues.

V EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Current Events and Political Socialization

The present study examined the relationship between competing sources of information as they influence the elementary school child's sense of civic awareness. Specifically, television news programs and the Weekly Reader were examined as sources which affect the student's political perceptions and each was found to meet the child's desire to learn about the world beyond the classroom and playground. Yet as competing sources, the Weekly Reader and television news create an uncertainty among the students as to which source is more authoritative in presenting them with news from the world beyond their own experience. How, then, can this confusion, and the accompanying psychological discomfort (dissonance) of the child, be eliminated?

To answer this question, some fundamental questions need to be asked. First, there is the question of who should take responsibility for political training of youth. The old injunction "never discuss politics or religion with friends" probably applies to the schools as well. Religion has been removed from the formal and even informal curricula in the public schools. But what about politics? Many parents regard the political acculturation of their children as their own

responsibility and are unwilling to yield this role to teachers or schools, particularly when partisan matters are involved. It can be argued that current events can be discussed from a non-partisan vantage point, but ultimately full discussions of political affairs touch upon partisan perspectives. If such partisan perspectives are at variance with parental positions, they will tend not only to confuse the child but -- to the extent that dissonant information is emitted by valued communicators such as parents and teachers -- place him in the psychological predicament of having to choose between authorities. However, the alternative to information overload often is too little information. If schools fail to provide at least a minimum of citizenship training, a pattern of ignorance and apathy may be created that will last through adulthood. A problem, therefore, is to find the proper mix of home and school citizenship training.

One approach to the problem, suggested by the findings in this report, is at least to assure some consistency between in-class and outside sources of political views. Undoubtedly the Weekly Reader and similar magazines must have entertainment value to attract the child's interest, but they could also be made more reflective of the important issues of the day. Perhaps a greater effort should be made to present national issues and events in a way that will make them interesting to the child rather than focussing on those (often

obscure) news topics that are believed to be inherently attractive to the child's interest.

Of course, the value of current events education must also be determined. By definition, current events have a short educational value. Yet, the concept guiding current events lesson plans seems to be that of enhancing political awareness, and not necessarily substantive knowledge of a given issue. If this is the case -- and if the purpose is also to encourage the child's use of non-textbook learning tools -- then the Weekly Reader serves a useful function. But, if the intent behind a weekly news magazine is also to familiarize students with the adult political world, then the Reader fails, as the content analysis has indicated.

Requiring home viewing of television news as a source of news for school children would help solve the problems of informing them of current events, but the cooperation of parents would be required. Very few children reported that they turned on the news if their parents were not watching (19.1 per cent), and there is little reason to expect that this figure would rise significantly if news viewing were made into a regular assignment. Problems such as the proximity of the news to the dinner hour, established viewing habits and competition for the use of the television in single set

households would impede this alternative. Moreover, the sophistication and attention span of younger students would be severely taxed.

Another solution might be the introduction of video taped (or filmed) newscasts into the classroom. Regular newscasts or specially produced children's news (but with adult topics) could be presented in a medium for which the children have high affect. Such presentations could serve as springboards for class discussions of the news, enhancing not only substantive knowledge but also the process of political discussion which this report has shown to be linked to viewing the news at home. The child's political awareness will thus be engendered at an earlier age.

This, of course, raises the third fundamental question: Is it necessary or desirable to speed up the political maturation process? The results of this report cannot be conclusive in this respect. Data in this report have shown that regardless of their news watching behavior, participation in political discussions, or combinations of viewing and discussion, children of the ages examined simply cannot fully comprehend why adults deem certain topics (e.g. foreign policy) important when these are neither interesting nor immediate to children.

The child's world is a limited one which does not encompass very abstract or non-immediate concepts. Moreover, the child, though he is exposed to adult information, cannot fully grasp its significance, given the limited experience and worldly knowledge which compose his cognitive system. It is likely that part of this inability is the result of confusion engendered by the multiplicity of information sources. Even the students whose only reported contact with the outside political world is through the Reader, seem to experience this confusion: involved here is probably the competition of other, unreported sources like parental conversations.

2. Suggestions for Further Research

The clear implications of any limited research effort such as the present study are that more thorough analyses are needed to explore fully the research avenues opened by the initial inquiry. The results of this study suggest several possible research questions worthy of attention as well as new research designs for replications.

One question devolving from the data concerns the use of socio-economic variables as explanatory variables or even as cleavage points for educational researchers.

None of the data showed significant correlations with the race or economic class of the child. Although the measures of SES were only raw indicators (no direct questions on family income or occupation were permitted), the absence of any consistency to the direction of socio-economic status-political discussions or socio-economic status news watching variables further suggests the weakness of socio-economic variables.[10]

Many educational researchers base their inquires on theories surrounding the culturally deprived child. Consequently, reforms which such researchers suggest are based on this monocausal explanation of their findings. The data from the present study show that the students' responses and independent of race or social class, not only with respect to in-class activities, but home use of the media as well. These findings may be related to the medium in question -- television -- which is available to both lower middle and middle classes. Had news weeklies or even newspapers been the media under investigation, the findings conceivably could have differed. In either case, however, new more theoretically useful variables than race of class must

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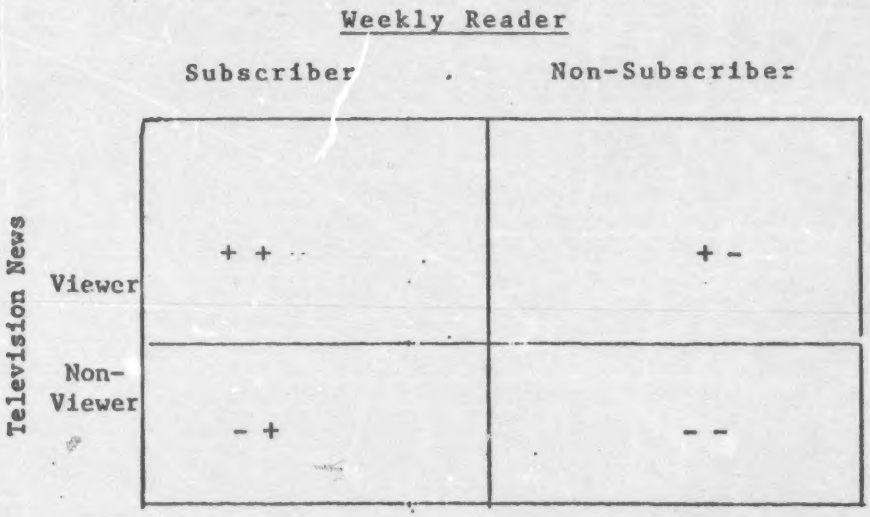
[10]See interview schedules in Appendix C.

be employed by future researchers, particularly as equality of educational opportunities is approached on the American scene.

Researchers who replicate this study might consider different controls to isolate home from school sources of political information. First, classes which do not use the Weekly Reader could be used as a control group, permitting a four-fold classification of students as in Figure 2. Some students would use neither source (--), one source (-+,+-),

Figure 2



or both (++), permitting sufficient control and assuring the ability to assess the effects of each source independently. A second research concern would be to test the longevity and cumulative effects of news stories. Although a multiwave panel study over

several years would be best, short-term studies are possible. The problem card method, which was found to be rewarding to the researchers (and fun for the children who tire easily during the interview session), could be employed, whereby the same news topics would be asked each time. Changes of the relative importance could then be measured.

A third research possibility would be the use of experimental methods, including specially prepared children's news materials for in-class viewing and comparing their effectiveness with experimental, adult-news oriented Weekly Readers.

The data collection methods in this study were insufficient to control fully for home and school political discussions in order to assess their impact on the child's news orientation. Future studies can incorporate such controls in their design (e.g., use a control group of boarding school children) to assess the impact of the home. Even in homes in which viewing television news is not followed by political discussion, casual remarks during the broadcast impact on the child's understanding of the news. Hence children viewing the news in isolation (experimental or non-experimental) may be found to exhibit different patterns of comprehension.

The role of the teacher as an influential source of political information remains to be more closely examined. Teachers were found to be minimally influential on the news viewing or the political discussion habits of their students. Educational researchers may find that the ambiguity of the teacher's role with respect to the dissemination of current events and political information carries over to other teacher activity. Finding teachers to be ineffective in any area implies the need for curriculum revision, but such reforms should wait for replicated findings. The teacher data in this report were based on very brief written questionnaires with a limited number of teachers rather than on extended classroom observations or in depth interviews. Nevertheless, further research on the relationship of overall teacher effectiveness to the presentation of current events material is needed.

VI SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this report data have been presented exploring the question of the relative impact on elementary school children of the two primary sources of classroom and non-classroom news, the Weekly Reader and television news. Reviewing first some of the major findings of the content analysis it was found that there were differences between the "child's world" stories in the Weekly Reader magazine

and the world of adult news as presented on network television news broadcasts. Within the Reader analyses differences were observed from grade to grade with an increasing amount of "adult world" news found in the older grades. Across all grades, the Weekly Reader reports resembeled vague or general issue discussions rather than current news items.

Most students were found to watch television news at least occasionally, and many students were regular viewers. Political discussions are engaged in by a majority of students, and the interests of many political issues is encouraged by television news. Television news not only served to prompt and foster political discussions and consciousness, but also frequently represented the only forum for political discussions.

Although the frequent use of television news was demonstrated, its greater effectiveness relative to other sources was not proven. Comparisons between students who viewed television news and those who did not showed no significant differences with respect to their ability to rank order the importance of problems facing America. Moreover,

a significant impact of the Weekly Reader on the ranking of problems was noted. The stories emphasized in the Reader were able to divert the attention of the child from adult world issues to child world topics.

Finally, a low stability over time of cognitively classifying important issues was found. Either confusion over the political agenda, because of the multiple information sources or lack of political maturation was considered as an explanation.

Although the major hypothesis of the research design was not conclusively validated a number of valuable insights was derived into the political socialization of young school children. Earlier researchers working with elementary school children found that young children had only an affective or symbolic attachment to the political system, or, more substantively, could identify only by name the branches of the government. The development of political cognitions other than those which are personal or symbolic would represent an important step in the political maturation process. If such congitions develop through exposure to television news and classroom materials, the contribution of these sources to the socialization process is manifest.

The political alienation and apathy which has plagued America in recent years can perhaps be traced to a failure of the educational system to provide an adequate exposure to our political culture. If it is the case that adult political cynicism and feelings of inefficacy are partly the results of inadequate political socialization during the childhood years, then the findings of this study have important implications for national educational policy and curriculum reform. Given the recent lowering of the voting age to eighteen, the need to foster political awareness and to introduce political information in the social curricula at an early age takes on a greater urgency.

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VIII APPENDICES

The documents and protocols used in this study are presented in the appendices which follow. Appendix A contains the list of categories used for the content analyses of the Weekly Reader and the network news, and a sample page from the Television News Index and Abstracts which served as a basis for the news content analysis. The third part of Appendix A shows the topics from which the problem cards were constructed during each interview wave.

Appendix B is the map of the William Penn School District from which the sample was drawn. Encircled are the six schools comprising the sample.

Appendix C presents the interview protocols for the students, parents and teachers. In addition, the cover letter accompanying the parent's interview schedule is shown. It should be recalled that the student questionnaires were orally administered while the parents and teachers' questionnaires were written.

APPENDIX A

There were a total of ninety-seven issues categories used for the television and Weekly Reader content analysis. Appendix A contains a sample page from the Television News Index and Abstracts from which the news content analysis was made. Also, Table A-1 presents the list of categories, some of which were collapsed for the final analysis. Finally, the issues from the Weekly Reader and the news which were written on problem cards for each round appear in Table A-2.

Figure 3

SAMPLE PAGE FROM TELEVISION NEWS ABSTRACTS AND INDEX

Thursday	January 11, 1973	ABC
5:00:20	INTRODUCTION — HOWARD K. SMITH (DC); HARRY REASONER (NYC)	
5:01:20	ECON. CONTROLS / PHASE III	
	(S) Phase I of Nixon's plan to control inflation began Aug., 1971; it was a total freeze in wages & prices. Phase II set up boards to allow rises in certain cases. Today Nixon announces Phase III.	HKS
	(Wt. Hse.) Phase III, as outlined by Treas. Secy. Shultz, eliminates Pay Board & Price Cmsn. Shift is to voluntary controls within established guidelines. [SHULTZ - explains nature of voluntarism.] Mandatory controls will continue in food, construction & med. care. Wages & prices remain under present guidelines. [Sen. Wm. PROXMIRE - says Pres. making serious mistake in easing up on controls.]	Tom Jarriel
5:04:00	STK. MKT. RPT. (S)	HR
5:04:30	(COMMERCIAL: Listerine; Subaru.)	
5:05:30	NIXON REELECTION CMTE.	
	(S) Justice Dept. charges Nixon's reelection finance cmte. with violating fed. election laws. Charges say cmte., through treas. Hugh Sloan, gave $300,000 to G. Gordon Liddy without rpting. it to General Accounting Office or making receipts.	HKS
5:06:10	WATERGATE CASE	
	(S) Howard Hunt pleads guilty to all charges against him.	HKS
	(DC) Howard Hunt, ex-CIA agent, ex-consult., offers to change plea to guilty on 3 of 6 counts against him. Judge Sirica denies motion. Hunt then offers to plead guilty to all 6 counts. Judge accepts this. Hunt answers questions composed by atty. Wm. Bittman. [HUNT - says did what he did in best interests of cntry. Does not believe higher officials involved in bugging.] Jury not informed of why Hunt missing from trial now for fear of prejudicing case of remaining 6.	Sam Donaldson Artist: Freda Reiter
5:08:20	FREEDOM OF PRESS / FARR	
	(S) Sup. Ct. Justice Wm. Douglas orders Los Angeles rptr. Wm. Farr released from jail while his contempt conviction under appeal. Farr in jail 48 days for refusal to answer questions about story he wrote on Chas. Manson trial.	HKS
5:08:40	(COMMERCIAL: Maley's MO; Alpo.)	
5:09:40	VIETNAM / PEACE TALKS	
	(S) Soviet Cmnst. pty. ldr. Brezhnev says feels VN war coming to end. In Paris Henry Kissinger & Le Duc Tho hold 4th mtg. Technical experts participate in VN talks.	HR

Figure 4 CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING HEADERS

Foreign

01. POWs
02. War, Viet
03. Domestic Response, anti-war activity
04. Vietnam Politics, War Diplomacy
05. Vietnam Military
06. Congress Response, Democratic
07. Congress Response, Republican
08. Japan
09. Asia
10. NATO, Western Europe
11. Western Europe, non-NATO
12. Ireland
13. Soviet Bloc (intra)
14. Soviet Bloc, Western Bloc (inter)
15. Soviet Bloc, Third World (inter)
16. China
17. Mideast
18. Other Asia, Vietnam related
19.
20. Africa (non-Mideast)
21. Latin America

Domestic

22. Labor news
23. Finance, Economy
24. Inflation
25. Unemployment
26. Wage and Price Controls
27. Ecology-Pollution
28. Consumer Affairs
29. Welfare Rights
30.
31. Health, Education, Welfare
32. School Busing
33. Gov't Ethics, Agnew
34. Gov't Secrecy, Milit. Secr., Critique of
35. Defense Dept.
36. Republican Party
37. Democratic Party
38. Energy
39. Farms
40. Civil Rights
41. Disaster
42. Urban Problems (transit, danger, housing)
43. Space
44. Crime, Law and Order
45. Other
46. Other, Foreign
47. Amusement/Recreation
48. Science Inventions
49. Holidays
50. Sports
51. Weather/Disaster
52. Art, Music
53. Games, Puzzles
54. Entertainment
55. Historical Discovery
56. Occupations
57. Animals
58. Science
59. Youth Achievements
60. Education
61. Minorities
63. Human Interest
64. Hobbies
65. Fads
66. Fiction
67. Executive Action-appointments
68. State Dept-Kissenger
69. Foreign Aid
70. Legislative Acts, Joint
71. Transportation-Safety
72. Women
73. Watergate
74. Senate Action
75. House Action
76. Courts
77. Vice President(Ford)
78. Joint Action
79. Terrorism
80. Free Press
81. Justice Dept.
82. Impeachment Plans
83. War-general
84. M.I.A.
85. Gov't Integrity
86. Moral Degeneration-Social Decay
87. Taxes
88. Overpopulation
89. Peace
90. Shortages, except gas, oil
91. International Relations
92. Gangs/Fighting
93. Military-general
94. Assassination, killing
95. Perversion, Child Abuse
96. Government Interference by Lawyers
97. Conservatism

Figure 5

PROBLEM CARDS

FIRST ROUND

Fourth Grade

*Animal Life
*Art and Music
China and Russia
Crime and Terrorism
*Ecology
Economy
Gas and Oil Shortages
Mideast
*Science and Inventions
*Sports
Watergate
*Young Peoples' Activities

Fifth Grade

*Animal Life
China and Russia
Crime and Terrorism
*Disasters, Accident Prevention
*Ecology
Economy
Gas and Oil Shortages
Mideast
*Sports
Watergate
*Women's Achievements
*Young Peoples' Activities

Sixth Grade

*Animal Life
China and Russia
Crime and Terrorism
*Disasters, Accident Preventi
*Ecology
Economy
Europe and South America
Gas and Oil Shortage
*Hobbies
Mideast
*Minority Affairs
*Women's Achievements

*Weekly Reader Topic

SECOND ROUND

Fourth Grade

*Animal Life
Crime and Terrorism
*Fads
Foreign Policy
Impeachment
Jobs, Wages, Strikes
Mideast
*Science and Inventions
*Sports
*Transportation and Travel
Watergate
*Youth Achievement

Fifth Grade

*Animal Life
Crime and Terrorism
*Ecology
Foreign Policy
Impeachment
Jobs, Wages, Strikes
Mideast
*Science and Inventions
*Sports
Watergate
*Women's Achievements
*Youth Activities

Sixth Grade

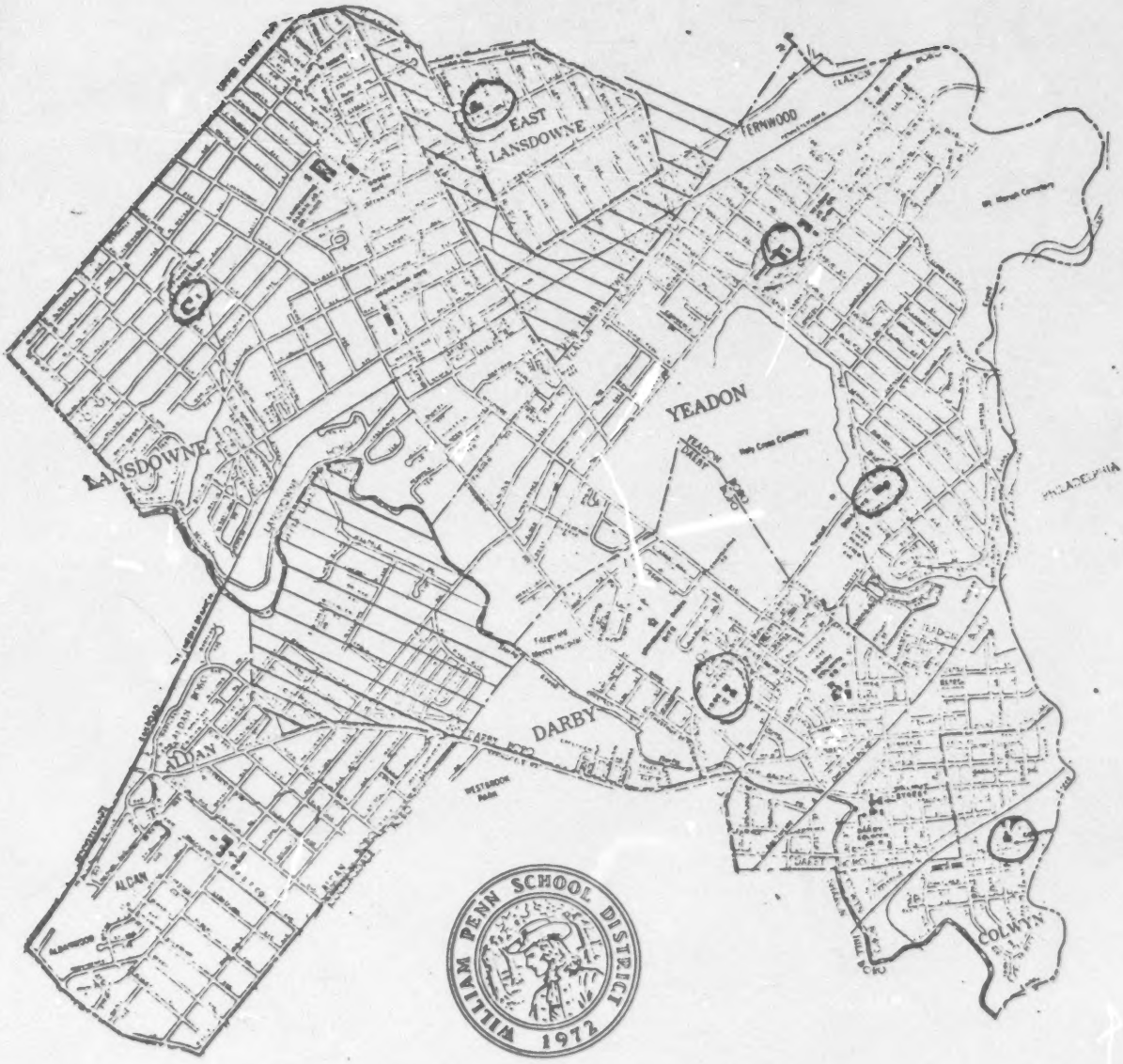
*Animal Life
*Art and Music
Crime and Terrorism
*Ecology
Foreign Policy
Impeachment
Jobs, Wages, Strikes
Mideast
*Science and Inventions
*Space and U.F.O's
*Sports
Watergate

APPENDIX B

This appendix includes the map of the William Penn School District from which the student sample was drawn.

Figure 6

WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP



APPENDIX C

The interview schedules for the students, parents and teachers appear in this appendix. In addition, the cover letter accompanying the parents interview schedule is attached.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - STUDENTS

Columns

1 - 3 Interviewer-Child Code#_____

4 Interviewer note grade of child.

1. Fourth
2. Fifth
3. Sixth

5 School Code #

1. Ardmore
2. Bell Ave.
3. Colwyn
4. East Landsdbwne
5. Evans
6. Ridge Ave.

6 Interviewer notes sex of child.

1. Male
2. Female

7 Interviewer notes race of child

1. White
2. Black
3. Other

* * *

INTERVIEWER: HI. MY NAME IS _____.
I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEVISION AND A FEW OTHER THINGS. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS, AND THIS IS NOT A TEST. I WOULD JUST LIKE YOU TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AS BEST YOU CAN.

* * *

8 - 9 INTERVIEWER: HOW OLD ARE YOU?_____

10 HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND WATCHING TELEVISION ON WEEKDAYS? I MEAN USUALLY, NOT JUST WHEN YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS ARE ON.

1. None
2. About an hour
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours

11 HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND WATCHING TELEVISION ON WEEKENDS? AGAIN, I MEAN USUALLY, NOT JUST YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS.

1. None
2. About an hour
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours
6. About 6-10 hours
7. More than 10 hours

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS ON TELEVISION?
(Probe to a five show limit)

12-14 1._____Code #_____

15-17 2._____Code #_____

18-20 3._____Code #_____

21-23 4._____Code #_____

24-26 5._____Code #_____

27 DO YOU WATCH TV ON SATURDAY MORNINGS?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

ON SATURDAY MORNINGS BETWEEN PROGRAMS SOME STATIONS SHOW BRIEF NEWS STORIES. HAVE YOU SEEN THESE MINI NEWS STORIES?

28

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

(If yes)

29 DO YOU PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT IS DISCUSSED?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

* * *

BOYS AND GIRLS ARE ALWAYS READING OR HEARING AND TALKING ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS THAT ARE REPORTED IN THE WEEKLY READER, THE NEWSPAPER, AND ON TELEVISION. TAKING ALL OF THESE SOURCES INTO ACCOUNT, WHAT ARE THE KINDS OF THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN AND TALK ABOUT MORE?

30-31 1._____ Code #_____

32-33 2._____ Code #_____

34-35 3._____ Code #_____

36-37 4._____ Code #_____

38-39 5._____ Code #_____

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT CERTAIN POLITICAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES FACING AMERICA TODAY?

40-41 1._____ Code #_____

42-43 2._____ Code #_____

44-45 3._____ Code #_____

46-47 4._____ Code #_____

48-49 5._____ Code #_____

* * *

50 HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY YOUR PARENTS WATCH THE DINNERTIME EVENING NEWS?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

51 DO YOU WATCH THE DINNERTIME EVENING NEWS ON TV?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

52 WOULD YOU SAY YOU WATCH DINNERTIME EVENING NEWS...

1. Even when your parents are not watching
2. Whenever your parents do
3. Sometimes when your parents do
4. Only when you're told to watch it.

(If parents and/or kids ever watch news)

53 AFTER THE NEWS IS OVER, DO YOU TALK ABOUT IT?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

54 DO YOU EVER TALK ABOUT THE NEWS OR ABOUT POLITICS AT ANY OTHER TIMES?

1. Yes
2. No

(If yes)

55 WITH WHOM DO YOU USUALLY TALK ABOUT POLITICS

1. Mother
2. Father
3. Mother and father
4. Brother or sister
5. Whole family

56 HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU TALK ABOUT POLITICS OR THE NEWS WITH YOUR TEACHER?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

57 HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU TALK ABOUT POLITICS OR THE NEWS WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

* * *

I AM NOW GOING TO GIVE YOU 12 "PROBLEM CARDS". ON EACH OF THESE CARDS YOU WILL FIND WRITTEN AN ISSUE CURRENTLY IN THE NEWS THAT SOME PEOPLE THINK IS IMPORTANT. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO TELL ME WHICH OF THESE PROBLEMS <u>YOU</u> THINK IS MOST IMPORTANT BY PICKING OUT THE CARD ON WHICH THE ISSUE IS WRITTEN. THEN PICK OUT THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE, THEN THE THIRD, AND SO FORTH UNTIL ALL THE CARDS ARE IN THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT A TEST. I JUST WANT TO FIND OUT THE ORDER IN WHICH <u>YOU</u> THINK THE CARDS SHOULD BE PLACED. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

58-59 (list issue code)	1._____
60-61	2._____
62-63	3._____
64-65	4._____
66-67	5._____
68-69	6._____
70-71	7._____
72-73	8._____
74-75	9._____
76-77	10._____
78-79	11._____
01-02	12._____

* * * * *

WHO IN THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE MOST ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE DONE?

3

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers, like the Attorney General and the Secretary of State

WHO IN GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE SECOND MOST ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE DONE?
(Repeat only the three not chosen)

4

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers, like the Attorney General and the Secretary of State

WHO IN GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE LEAST ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE DONE?
(Repeat all choices)

5

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers

DO YOU LIKE TO WATCH TELEVISION....

6

1. As often as possible
2. When you're in the mood
3. When there is nothing else to do

-9 Repeat Interviewer-Child Code#_____

WELL, THOSE ARE ALL THE QUESTIONS I HAVE FOR YOU. THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING THEM.

SECOND STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Column No.

7-9 I.D. # _____

HI. A FEW MONTHS AGO, YOU'LL REMEMBER, ONE OF US ASKED YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEVISION AND SOME OTHER THINGS. NOW WE WOULD JUST LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW MORE QUESTIONS. REMEMBER, THIS ISN'T A TEST, AND THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. O.K.?

* * * *

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND WATCHING TELEVISION ON WEEKDAYS? I MEAN USUALLY, NOT JUST WHEN YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS ARE ON? WOULD YOU SAY...

10
1. None
2. About an hour
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours

DO YOU LIKE TO WATCH TELEVISION...

11
1. As often as possible
2. When you are in the mood
3. When there is nothing else to do

WHEN YOU WATCH T.V., YOU WATCH BECAUSE THERE IS A PROGRAM YOU WANT TO SEE. YOU WATCH PROGRAMS THAT ARE FUN. IN ADDITION, THOUGH, PEOPLE CAN LIKE T.V. FOR EVEN MORE REASONS. WHEN YOU WATCH T.V., FOR EXAMPLE, DO YOU WATCH...

12
1. So you can talk with your friends about the programs you see?
2. So you can see how the other people live?
3. So you can see people do things you would like to do but can't do or are not allowed to ?

S.Q. II p. 2

13 HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY YOUR PARENTS WATCH THE DINNERTIME EVENING NEWS?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

14 MOST STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT THE NEWS FROM T.V. OR THE WEEKLY READER. NO MATTER WHICH OF THESE YOU LIKE MORE, WHY DO YOU LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEWS?

1. So you can tell your friends or parents interesting things you see or read about in the news?
2. So you can see or read what other people in the world are doing?
3. So you can see or read about people doing things you would like to do but can't or are not allowed to?

* * * * *

I AM NOW GOING TO GIVE YOU A SCALE, WHICH IS LIKE A THERMOMETER, EXCEPT THAT IT GOES FROM SIDE TO SIDE INSTEAD OF UP AND DOWN. ON EACH OF THESE SCALES, YOU WILL FIND TWO WORDS WHICH HAVE OPPOSITE MEANINGS. WHAT I WOULD LIKE YOU TO DO IS MOVE THE RED BUTTON IN THE DIRECTION OF THE WORD WHICH BEST DESCRIBES THE TYPE OF PERSON THAT I AM ASKING ABOUT. YOU CAN MOVE THE BUTTON AS FAR IN THE DIRECTION OF THE WORD AS YOU LIKE, OR JUST A LITTLE BIT IF YOU LIKE. REMEMBER AS THE BUTTON GETS CLOSER TO THE WORD IT BECOMES, FOR EXAMPLE, VERY VERY GOOD OR VERY VERY BAD. SO IF SOMETHING IS ONLY A LITTLE BIT GOOD OR A LITTLE BIT BAD, YOU WOULD NOT MOVE THE BUTTON SO CLOSE TO THE END OF THE SCALE. SOME THINGS MAY BE NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD--IN WHICH CASE YOU WOULD LEAVE IT RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE. ON THE SCALE YOU MIGHT PUT YOUR BEST FRIEND AS VERY GOOD, AND YOUR WORST ENEMY AS VERY BAD, AND SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND HOW THESE SCALES WORK NOW? O.K LET'S BEGIN.

S.Q. II p. 3

WHEN YOU THING ABOUT POLICEMEN, DO YOU THINK OF THEM AS:

15 WEAK-STRONG _____

16 GOOD-BAD _____

17 STUPID-SMART _____

18 HONEST-DISHONEST _____

19 VIOLENT-GENTLE _____

20 HELPFUL-HARMFUL _____

WHEN YOU THINK OF FOREIGNERS, DO YOU THINK OF THEM AS:

21 WEAK-STRONG _____

22 GOOD-BAD _____

23 STUPID-SMART _____

24 HONEST-DISHONEST _____

25 VIOLENT-GENTLE _____

26 HELPFUL-HARMFUL _____

WHEN YOU THINK OF MILITARY OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS, DO YOU THINK OF THEM AS

27 WEAK-STRONG _____

28 GOOD-BAD _____

29 STUPID-SMART _____

30 HONEST-DISHONEST _____

31 VIOLENT-GENTLE _____

32 HELPFUL-HARMFUL _____

S.Q. II p. 4

WHEN YOU THINK OF TEACHERS IN GENERAL (NOT JUST YOUR TEACHER) DO YOU THINK OF THEM AS:

33 WEAK-STRONG _____

34 GOOD-BAD _____

35 STUPID-SMART _____

36 HONEST-DISHONEST _____

37 VIOLENT-GENTLE _____

38 HELPFUL-HARMFUL _____

WHEN YOU THINK OF YOURSELF, NOT AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE BUT AS YOU REALLY ARE, DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS:

39 WEAK-STRONG _____

40 GOOD-BAD _____

41 STUPID-SMART _____

42 HONEST-DISHONEST _____

43 VIOLENT-GENTLE _____

44 HELPFUL-HARMFUL _____

* * * * *

NOW, DO YOU REMEMBER THE "PROBLEM CARDS" FROM LAST TIME? WELL, THIS TIME, I AM GOING TO ASK YOU TO PUT THESE CARDS IN ORDER. YOU SHOULD PICK OUT THE CARD WITH THE WORD THAT BEST DESCRIBES WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE LIKE, THEN THE NEXT ONE, AND SO FORTH UNTIL ALL THE CARDS ARE IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. O.K.?

45 _____

46 _____

47 _____

48 _____

49 _____

50 _____

WHEN YOU READ OR HEAR ABOUT EVENTS THAT HAPPEN IN OTHER CITIES OR COUNTRIES, DO YOU EVER THINK THAT THESE EVENTS WILL HAVE AN EFFECT ON YOU?

51
1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Once in a while
4. Hardly ever

IF YOU HAD AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM THAT YOU WANTED SOMEONE IN GOVERNMENT TO SOLVE, WHO WOULD YOU WANT TO CALL?

52
1. The Mayor
2. The Governor
3. The President

DO YOU THINK THAT THE THINGS YOU SEE ON TELEVISION SHOW LIFE THE WAY IT REALLY IS:

53
1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Once in a while
4. Hardly ever

DO YOU LIKE TO READ THE WEEKLY READER?

54
1. Always
2. Most of the time
3. Once in a while
4. Hardly ever

(IF YES) WHY DO YOU LIKE TO READ IT:

55
1. So you can tell your friends or parents interesting things you read about?
2. So you know what other people in the world are doing?
3. So you can read about people who do things you can't or are not allowed to do?

S.Q. II p. 6

BOYS AND GIRLS ARE ALWAYS READING OR HEARING AND TALKING ABOUT LOTS OF THINGS THAT ARE REPORTED IN THE WEEKLY READER, THE NEWSPAPER, AND ON TELEVISION. TAKING ALL OF THESE SOURCES INTO ACCOUNT, WHAT ARE THE KINDS OF THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN AND TALK ABOUT MORE?

56-57 _____ I.D. #_____

58-59 _____ I.D. #_____

60-61 _____ I.D. #_____

62-63 _____ I.D. #_____

64-65 _____ I.D. #_____

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT CERTAIN POLITICAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES FACING AMERICA TODAY?

66-67 _____ I.D. #_____

68-69 _____ I.D. #_____

70-71 _____ I.D. #_____

72-73 _____ I.D. #_____

74-75 _____ I.D #_____

WHO IN GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE MOST ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE DONE?

76

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers, like the Attorney General and the Secretary of State

WHO IN GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE SECOND MOST ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE DONE?
(repeat only the three not chosen)

77

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers, like the Attorney General and the Secretary of State

WHO IN GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE LEAST ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE DONE?
(repeat all choices)

78

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers, like the Attorney General and the Secretary of State

* * * *

I AM NOW GOING TO GIVE YOU 12 "PROBLEM CARDS". ON EACH OF THESE CARDS YOU WILL FIND WRITTEN AN ISSUE CURRENTLY IN THE NEWS THAT SOME PEOPLE THINK IS IMPORTANT. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO TELL ME WHICH OF THESE PROBLEMS YOU THINK IS MOST IMPORTANT BY PICKING OUT THE CARD ON WHICH THE ISSUE IS WRITTEN. THEN PICK OUT THE NEXT MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE, THEN THE THIRD, AND SO FORTH UNTIL ALL THE CARDS ARE IN THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT A TEST. I JUST WANT TO FIND OUT THE ORDER IN WHICH YOU THINK THE CARDS SHOULD BE PLACED. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

S.Q. II p. 8

Card # 4

1-3 I.D. # _____ (repeat student I.D. number)

(List I.D. #, most important to least important)

4-5 _____

6-7 _____

8-9 _____

10-11 _____

12-13 _____

14-15 _____

16-17 _____

18-19 _____

20-21 _____

22-23 _____

24-25 _____

26-27 _____

* * * *

TAKING EVERYTHING INTO ACCOUNT, DO YOU THINK THAT THE UNITED STATES IS A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE IN AS IT IS, OR THAT WE SHOULD WORK MUCH HARDER TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS?

28

1. O.K. as it is
2. Should be improved

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE LIKE THE HEROES ON YOUR FAVORITE TELEVISION SHOWS?

29

1. In lots of different ways
2. In only one or two ways
3. Not very much like them at all

S.Q. II p. 9

30 WOULD YOU WANT TO BE MORE LIKE YOUR FAVORITE T.V. PEOPLE?

1. Yes, very much like them
2. Just a little bit like them
3. Not at all like them

31 HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK IT IS TO LEARN TO DEFEND YOURSELF?

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not very important

32 IF SOMEONE CUT IN FRONT OF YOU ON A LONG LINE, WOULD YOU...

1. Shove them out
2. Yell at them
3. Ignore them

* * * * *

33 NOW I WANT TO GIVE YOU TWO STATEMENTS. AFTER I READ THEM WOULD YOU TELL ME IF THIS IS WHAT YOU GENERALLY DO.

"WHEN PEOPLE YELL AT ME, I YELL BACK."

IS THIS YOUR REACTION...

1. Often
2. Usually not

"IT'S ALL RIGHT TO HIT SOMEONE IF YOU ARE MAD AT THAT PERSON FOR A GOOD REASON."

DO YOU THINK THIS IS ALL RIGHT TO DO...

34
1. Often
2. Usually not

S.Q II p 10

35 IN GENERAL, WOULD YOU RATHER WATCH DRAMA PROGRAMS WITH A LOT OF EXCITEMENT AND MYSTERY OR COMEDY PROGRAMS WITH A LOT OF JOKES AND LAUGHS?

1. Drama
2. Comedy

SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT GOOD PEOPLE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LIE TO OR TRICK BAD PEOPLE TO STOP THEM BAD PEOPLE FROM HURTING OTHERS. SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT GOOD PEOPLE HAVE TO BE HONEST AND TRUTHFUL NO MATTER WHAT. WHICH DO YOU BELIEVE?

36
1. Good people should be allowed to lie to or trick bad people to stop them from hurting others
2. Good people must always be honest and truthful no matter what

37 INTERVIEWER NUMBER_____

****

WELL, THOSE ARE ALL THE QUESTIONS I HAVE FOR YOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR HELPING US WITH THIS PROJECT.

Foreign Policy Research Institute
3508 MARKET STREET, SCIENCE CENTER
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19104

ROBERT L. PFALTZGRAFF, JR.
DIRECTOR

TELEPHONE
215-EVergreen 2-0685

December 14, 1973

Dear Parent,

Your child may have told you that he or she participated in a project being undertaken in cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania and the William Penn School Distrct to assess the possibility of using television as a classroom teaching tool. We hope that this study will enable us to determine and provide the best possible educational and instructional materials for your children.

We are asking the parents of the children to fill out this very brief questionnaire so that we may better understand the television and news viewing preferences in the home. The success of this study and our ability to improve educational opportunities depends on the cooperation of the parents, so we ask that you complete the questionnaire and mail it in the attached postpaid envelope. Please do not discuss these questions or your answers with your child until after you have completed the form. If you have more than one child participating you only need fill out one form. The identity of the children and the parents participating will be kept strictly confidential. Do not place your name on the form.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, about the project, please do not hesitate to call me at any time. If you wish to receive a free copy of the results, please check the appropriate box on the questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

Robert S. Frank
Principal Investigator

Written Questionnaire--Parents

Column

10 Person answering questionnaire:

1. Father
2. Mother
3. Father and Mother

11 Would you like to see the results of this study?

1. Yes
2. No

12 Do you enjoy watching television...

1. As often as possible?
2. When you're in the mood?
3. When there is nothing else to do?

What are your favorite television shows? List up to five please.

13-15 1. _____

16-18 2. _____

19-21 3. _____

22-24 4. _____

25-27 5. _____

28 Does your child enjoy watching television...

1. As often as possible?
2. When he or she is in the mood?
3. When he or she has nothing else to do?

What are his/her favorite television shows? Please list up to five.

29-31 1. _____

32-34 2. _____

35-37 3. _____

38-40 4. _____

41-43 5. _____

How much time do you spend each weekday, on the average, watching television? Would you say about...

44

1. None (circle one)
2. About an hour
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours
6. More than 6 hours

45 How much time do you spend each weekend day, on the average, watching television? Would you say about...

1. None
2. About an hour (circle one)
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours
6. About 6-10 hours
7. More than 10 hours

46 How much time would you say your child spends, on the average, watching television each <u>weekday</u>? Would you say about...

1. None (circle one)
2. About an hour
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours

47 How much time would you say your child spends, on the average, watching television each <u>weekend</u> day? Would you say about...

1. None (circle one)
2. About an hour
3. About 1 or 2 hours
4. About 2-4 hours
5. About 4-6 hours
6. About 6-10 hours
7. More than 10 hours

What do you think are the most important issues facing the nation today? List up to 5.

48-49 1. _____

50-51 2. _____

52-53 3. _____

54-55 4. _____

56-57 5. _____

How often do you read a newspaper? Would you say...

58
1. Never
2. Once a week
3. A few times a week
4. Every day

59 How often do you watch the dinner time Network (i.e. ABC, CBS, or NBC Evening News) news?

1. Never
2. Once a week
3. A few times a week
4. Every weeknight

60 When the news is on television, how often does your child watch it?

1. The child turns on the news even when you, the parent, are not watching.
2. Whenever you, the parent, are watching
3. Sometimes when you, the parent are watching
4. The child watches only when he/she is told to

61 After the news is over, do you talk about politics or political issues with your child?

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

2 Do you talk about politics or political issues at any other times besides after the news? (such as at work, with friends)

1. Very often
2. Sometimes
3. Almost never

Page five--Parents

Below you will find written some issues currently in the news that some people think are important. In the spaces provided, please write the issue which you think is most important. On the second line write the issue which is second most important, and so on, until all sever issues are listed in their order of importance to you.

China and Russia
Crime and Terrorism
Economy
Europe and South America
Gas and Oil Shortage
Mideast War
Watergate

63 Most Important _____

64 Second Most _____

65 Third Most _____

66 Fourth Most _____

67 Fifth Most _____

68 Sixth Most _____

69 Least Important _____

Who in Government is doing the most about the things that you think need to be done?

70

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers

Who in Government is doing the second most about the things that you think to be done?

71

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers

72 Who in Government is doing <u>least</u> about the things that you think need to be done?

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Column

73 Politically, would you characterize yourself as:

1. Liberal Democrat
2. Middle-of-the-road Democrat
3. Independent
4. Middle-of-the-road Republican
5. Conservative Republican
6. Other _____(please specify)

74 Do you think that political affairs and current news events should be integrated into your grade's classroom curriculum?

1. Yes, almost always
2. Sometimes, but only certain types of news issues
3. Almost never

75 Would you characterize your use of the Weekly Reader in your classroom as:

1. Something you use regularly both for content and for the entertainment value (puzzles, crosswords, etc.)?
2. Something you only use for the content?
3. Something you use mainly for the entertainment value?
4. Something you only use intermittently?

76 In your classroom presentations and discussions, would you say that your reference to and use of television material, whether it be TV news and/or specials and/or "entertainment programs" is:

1. Something that you try to bring into your classroom discussion as often as possible?

2. Something that you try to bring into your classroom discussion only sometimes?

3. Something that you rarely ever refer to in your classroom presentations?

77 We have found that certain news issues are emphasized in television news broadcasts. These issues are listed below. Next to each issue, would you please put the number of importance to American society, so that there will be a "1" next to the issue which you think is most important, a "2" next to the second most important issue, and so fourth until all seven issues are numbered in the order which you consider them important.

_____ China and Russia

_____ Crime and Terrorism

_____ Economy

_____ Europe and South America

_____ Gas and Oil Shortage

_____ Mideast War

_____ Watergate

78 Who in American government is doing the <u>most</u> about the things that you think need to be done?

1. Judges and the Courts

2. The President

3. Senators and Congressmen

4. Cabinet Officers, like the Attorney General and the Secretary of State

79 Who in American government is doing the second most about the things that you think need to be done?

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers. . .

80 Who in American government is doing the least about the things that you think need to be done?

1. Judges and the Courts
2. The President
3. Senators and Congressmen
4. Cabinet Officers. . .

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS

* * *